

WHY EU COMMON SECURITY AND DEFENSE POLICY SERVES U.S. INTERESTS

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ABSTRACT

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The European Union (EU) is probably the single most important organization of which the United States is not a member. With the Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) the EU has an integrated and consolidated view on security and defense issues independent from NATO. The EU and the U.S. share the same view on global threats and their root causes. CSDP put emphasis on the use of all political means and supporting instruments in crisis situations. The EU has the unique capability to apply both civilian instruments like police support, border assistance, monitoring, rule of law, development, civil service, and economic support and military instruments for peace supporting operations. This approach serves not only European but also U.S. interests. The EU can operate in regions where the U.S. is either not welcome or has no priority. The U.S. and the EU should improve their relationship on security issues based on their common interests as economic world powers.

WHY EU COMMON SECURITY AND DEFENSE POLICY SERVES U.S. INTERESTS

The European Union (EU) is probably the single most important organization of which the United States is not a member. This partnership of 27 European countries is a unique effort among sovereign states. Through a series of Treaties the EU has expanded to its latest milestone, the Treaty of Lisbon. Among many other issues the Treaty, which went into effect on 1 December 2009, provides new coherence in the EU external action - the engagement of the EU with other actors in the world.¹ The appointment of an EU High Representative (HR) for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the establishment of the External Action Service (EEAS) are the start of a new era in EU foreign policy.

The Lisbon Treaty enhances the EU engagement in issues which used to be the sole responsibility of the sovereign member states. With the Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) it has an integrated and consolidated view on security and defense issues. CSDP put emphasis on the use of all political means in crisis situations. Since the EU shares the same interests in monitoring and supporting stability in the world as the U.S., the developments of the CSDP in the areas of justice, homeland security, diplomacy, defense and development are very relevant to the United States.² This is not really recognized in the U.S.; Vice President Joe Biden has not mentioned CSDP once in his blog "Advancing Europe's Security," which was published one day prior to his address to the European Parliament.³ The EU has many instruments which might complement the U.S. efforts in stability and reconstruction and other non-military conflict prevention. The EU should be considered a partner of choice, able to act independently and decisively, contributing to U.S. interests.

History

The modern history of a common European military organization starts in 1950. The founders of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) designed the European Defense Community (EDC). After the French Senate refused to ratify the Treaty of Paris, the envisaged force formed out of multinational contributions - from France, Germany, UK, Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg - and commanded by a supranational authority was not founded. After this it was decided to include Germany and Italy and modify the Treaty of Brussels (1948) to incorporate controls and ceilings on armed forces, which resulted in the Western European Union (WEU).⁴ The WEU recognized the prime responsibility for European security of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Soon the WEU entered a dormant period.⁵ On the other side the EU, as successor of the ECSC, concentrated on economical issues.⁶

The Treaty of Maastricht in 1992 revitalized the idea of a common EU defense policy by stating “Resolved to implement a common foreign and security policy including the eventual framing of a common defense policy, which might in time lead to a common defense”.⁷ Further progress was made in 1998 when France and the United Kingdom at their summit held in St. Malo agreed to start an initiative that became the European Defense and Security Policy (ESDP).⁸ In the same period the WEU enlarged with new members from Eastern Europe and contributed in the Yugoslav crisis with several peace keeping operations.

The ESDP was formalized in the Treaty of Nice (2001). Like the Maastricht Treaty, the Nice Treaty recognized the obligations of some member states towards NATO. It did not envisage a common defense, but neither excluded it.⁹ The objective of ESDP was not a collective defense of territory and was certainly not the start of an

integrated European army. ESDP was part of the political development to an European identity. It supported the common foreign policy as one of the instruments to be used by the European Union.

The Lisbon Treaty was ratified and became effective on 1 December 2009. One of the important subjects in the Lisbon Treaty is the Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP). It replaces the ESDP and “covers all areas of foreign policy and all questions relating to the Union’s security”.¹⁰ Javier Solana, EU Secretary General, assessed that the Treaty would provide new momentum in EU’s comprehensive method of engagement.¹¹ Subsequently on 30 March 2010 the WEU Permanent Council decided to terminate the Modified Brussels Treaty and close the organization.¹²

Common Security and Defense Policy

Without doubt the EU is a strong economic, geographic and political power. It has the biggest internal market worldwide, the GDP is comparable to that of the U.S. and its share in world economy represents more than 20%. Being a powerful actor with global reach it is clear that, like the U.S., the EU has large interests in monitoring and supporting regional stability.¹³

In the Petersberg declaration Western European Union member states declared their readiness to make troops available for operations in the whole spectrum of their conventional forces for EU and NATO. They covered humanitarian aid and rescue operations, peace keeping tasks and tasks of combat forces in crisis management, including peacemaking.¹⁴ CSDP includes these so-called Petersberg tasks. In the Lisbon Treaty these tasks are further specified to include joint disarmament operations, military advice and assistance tasks, peace-making and post conflict stabilization, conflict prevention and post-conflict stabilization missions.¹⁵ Member states shall make

civilian and military assets available to participate in CSDP operations; these contributions are voluntary. Individual member states can block an operation since decisions in the field of foreign policy and defense are taken unanimously. However, article 44 of the Lisbon treaty makes it possible for a group of willing and able EU member states to work together on operations or the development of military capabilities and means of action for CSDP, a “permanent structured cooperation”. This requires a decision taken by the Council with a qualified majority.¹⁶

CSDP represents in theory exactly what the United States policy on Europe has pushed for in the past 50 years. CSDP ensures European integration, greater coordination in security policy and more balanced burden sharing. However, the transatlantic security relationship is for a greater part based on the alliance within the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and not on a U.S. - EU relationship. The shared concern for European security on both sides of the ocean made it in the 2nd half of the twentieth century obvious that a European defense without the U.S. would not be possible. But the changes in the world since the wall was torn down required new assessments.¹⁷ Without a collective enemy in the east and with the U.S. focusing on other parts of the world, the EU was required to play a more autonomous role in security and defense.

Since the first operations in 2003, EU Police Mission in Bosnia and Operation Concordia in the Former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia, the EU has started 24 civilian missions and military operations. Eleven of those have been successfully accomplished. Among them are the Assistance and Monitoring Mission in Aceh Indonesia and the EUFOR CHAD/RCA. EU currently executes 13 military operations and civilian missions. Some of them are rather small, like the Security Sector Reform

mission in Guinea Bissau, but not less important. Since Guinea Bissau is one of the main transit routes for cocaine to Europe¹⁸ it is very important to provide advice on a new security structure in that country. Other missions are much bigger like EULEX KOSOVO where the EU took over most of the responsibilities from the UN when Kosovo declared its independence.

Military CSDP operations are financed partly via cost sharing among all member states and for a greater part born by the member state which provides the troops (costs lie where they fall). The budgets for Civilian CSDP missions are provided by the EU budget for Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), which means that costs are shared by all member states. The budget for 2010 is \$ 373 million. This is just a very small part of the total budget available for all instruments for external action, such as the Development Cooperation Instrument, the Instrument for Stability, and the budget for Humanitarian Aid. The total budget for the “EU as a world player” is \$ 75 billion for the period 2007 - 2013.¹⁹

Security Strategies

The European Security Strategy identifies three main principles on which the European external action is based: firstly prevention, the EU is ready to undertake as much as possible to prevent a conflict; secondly the holistic approach, the use of a mixture of instruments to address all dimensions of a conflict; and thirdly multilateralism, cooperation through partnerships and with international organizations.²⁰ The European Security Strategy mentions terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, regional conflicts, state failure and organized crime as the key threats to Europe. These threats are more diverse, less visible and less predictable than ever.²¹ In addressing the

threats it is stated that conflict prevention and threat prevention cannot start too early. Compared to the Cold War the new threats are “not purely military and cannot be tackled with purely military means”²². The European Security Strategy puts emphasis on the requirement to use a mixture of instruments. For example fighting terrorism needs intelligence, police, judicial, military and other means, regional conflicts on the other hand require first and foremost political solutions, although military assets and effective policing may be needed in the post conflict phase. The European Union has all the capabilities to respond to such multi-faceted threats.²³

The U.S. National Security Strategy and the European Security Strategy share the same values, aims and threat perceptions. The ideals that inspired the American history – freedom, democracy and human dignity –²⁴ are also the ideals of the European peoples. Terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, regional conflicts, state failure and organized crime are the threats identified by both the EU and the U.S. In the evaluation of the European Security Strategy in 2008 Javier Solana reinforced the threat analysis by putting emphasis on these subjects and adding energy security and climate change to the original assessment.²⁵ The differences between the security strategies may lie in the means to approach crises. Although the U.S. National Security Strategy put emphasis on the use of all instruments of national power, the U.S. places more emphasis on the importance on military means to resolve conflicts.²⁶ For the Europeans military instruments are the last resort.²⁷ As pointed out, the European Security Strategy stresses that all political resources must be used first.

The cause of this difference is obvious. The U.S. as the main military power in the world can dominate a military conflict. The EU has two challenges executing military power. Firstly its military capability is limited and secondly decisions on military

engagement need to be taken by consensus amongst 26 member states.²⁸ By contrast, the U.S. has difficulties in providing civilian capacities to stabilize a situation after a conflict, as Iraq has shown. Currently the U.S. is setting up new civilian capabilities for post conflict situations. At the end of 2009 the Civilian Response Corps (CRC) has reached strength of only 78 active and 554 stand-by members.²⁹ Compared to the military strength of the US the CRC is a limited capability. The intention of President Obama to send more civilian personnel to Afghanistan is a promising step to increase the capacity for post conflict situations. Exactly in this area lies the strength of the EU. The EU has 5000 police officers, 300 rule of law specialist and more than 2000 civil protection specialists available to be deployed on short notice.³⁰ These differences complement each other and could be explored by dividing tasks. That requires from both sides effective co-operation in crisis-management prior to engagement and knowledge about each other's capabilities and short-falls.³¹

Transatlantic Relations

From a U.S. perspective there is no direct transatlantic security relationship with the EU. The concern of the U.S. regarding CSDP over the past years was that a more autonomous EU military structure would evolve to the organization which has prime responsibility for European security without taking note of the interests of the U.S.³² Linked to this is the concern that the U.S. might be dragged - by the EU - into a crisis it does not want to be engaged in, because an autonomous Europe engaged in a military operation might need support from NATO or the U.S. when things go wrong. Furthermore autonomous EU engagement in crises could mean that the U.S. is not able to influence the response to the crisis.

Most U.S. scholars, diplomats and politicians see NATO as the only institution for transatlantic cooperation on security issues.³³ This is based as well on the fact that the U.S. can influence European security via NATO as on the American view that security is basically a military issue. The U.S. Secretary of State confirmed this during her visit to the French Ecole Militaire in January 2010: "...economic and development and political and legal on the one hand in the EU and principally security on the other hand in NATO."³⁴ For most Europeans NATO is the forum for security policy cooperation with the U.S.; CSDP is seen as the possibility to act autonomously and independently from the U.S.³⁵

NATO is the world's strongest alliance; however, it is merely a military alliance. The European allies within NATO have not evolved in the development of military power as the United States. Hence this leads to differences in used technologies, numbers of equipment and interoperability challenges. Because of these differences in capabilities and capacities NATO remains U.S. dominated.³⁶ As a military alliance NATO is ill equipped to undertake the many civilian functions required for modern peacekeeping operations, like police training, rule of law support, voter registration and economic development.³⁷ NATO does have the ambition to take up the challenge and get itself suitable to execute these civilian tasks. It is not clear in what way the currently discussed NATO Strategic Concept might support this change.

The European Union however is already equipped to undertake the civilian functions, supported by military means. CSDP will not transform the European Union into a new NATO nor duplicate the alliance. Although there is a mutual defense clause in the Treaty, the EU will not become a military alliance based on collective defense.³⁸ The EU will transform into an organization which can apply a wide variety of instruments

to support international peace in a coherent way. The EU already has the unique capability to apply both civilian instruments like police support, border assistance, monitoring, rule of law, development, civil service, and economic support and military instruments for peace supporting operations. So far civilian and military instruments are used separately; however it is expected that the next step will be to come to combined civilian and military missions. Military providing security while civilians execute their tasks commanded by one commander. This ultimate comprehensive approach can be achieved when all the instruments are owned by just one organization.

Future transatlantic relations require that the U.S. share more responsibility with the EU, accepting that the EU follows its own direction. In contrast to NATO the U.S. does not have influence in the decision making process of the EU. The EU will take its own decisions based on the EU interests as outlined in the Lisbon Treaty and the EU Security Strategy. On the other hand this requires the EU to share more of the burden in international crises.³⁹ One of the aspects where change is needed is the relationship within NATO. Firstly the U.S. should not approach Europe for security issues only via NATO, secondly NATO cooperation with the EU should be intensified. The new NATO Strategic Concept, to be issued by the end of 2010, could address the last issue.

Support of U.S. Interests

The U.S. National Security Strategy stresses the importance to cooperate with others when preventing and resolving regional conflicts. It assesses that for conflict intervention only NATO is an acceptable partner, while the EU and others are seen as partners for post-conflict stabilization and reconstruction.⁴⁰ This needs to be explored; a more intensive cooperation is needed. The U.S. can benefit from the fact that they are not a member of the EU.

The specific European approach to CSDP missions helps that these are not only of interest for the U.S. but also can support the U.S. strategy in a region. For example in support of the UN and African Union (AU) missions in Somalia the EU leads two operations. The first being the anti piracy operation EUNAVFOR Somalia, also called ATALANTA. Since early 2009 the EU has successfully supported the UN World Food Program (WFP) and fought pirates in the Gulf of Aden and the Somali Basin. A recommended transit corridor in the Gulf of Aden has been established. Secondly the EU just started an operation to train Somali military in Uganda in support of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG). Both activities support the U.S. efforts in the region as outlined by General Ward in his 2010 U.S. Africa Command Posture Statement.⁴¹

Other operations which serve the U.S. National Security Strategy are the civilian missions in Georgia, Iraq and Afghanistan. In Georgia the EU has monitored the Administrative Border Line (ABL) since the Russian-Georgian war in 2008. In Iraq the EU trains judges, prosecutors and other justice personnel. The EU Police mission in Afghanistan trains Afghan high level police officers in actual police work like criminal investigations. This differs from both the U.S. and NATO training mission which focuses on the work of lower level police officers like patrolling and manning check points.

These examples show that Europe cannot only play a role in peace operations in Europe, but can also step in to support existing operations or execute new operations with niche capabilities. Europe can provide very specialized capabilities, small missions in support of larger efforts.

Europe can execute missions where both U.S. and NATO, and the United Nations (UN) are not welcome. When President Sarkozy, at that time President of the

European Council, mediated the cease fire in the Russian-Georgian conflict in Summer 2008 it was clear that some international presence was needed. Although not official the Georgian flirt with the west and NATO is seen as one of the causes of the conflict. It was clear that neither the U.S. nor NATO could play a role in the monitoring mission. The EU was able to deploy more than 300 multinational monitors and a supporting staff to Georgia and reach full operational capability within 30 days after the cease fire. Also in Chad the U.S. was not welcome, while in Aceh the UN was not acceptable to the Indonesians.

Challenges

Although large steps are taken, many challenges remain. Certainly there is some skepticism about CSDP within the EU, although some positive movements can be observed. Some EU member states, the British up front, are too protective of their special relationship with the U.S. and do not want to take any risk and sacrifice the relationship for the sake of CSDP.⁴² The appointment of the British politician Catherine Ashton as High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy might positively influence the British view.

France on one side and the United Kingdom on the other side do not agree on the level of ambition. France looks for an independent Europe that can conduct autonomous operations globally, if needed without the U.S. Some EU member states believe France uses CSDP to reinforce the French influence in global matters, in particular in Africa. The French hope that their return in the integrated military structure of NATO shows that this is not the case. The British would like to use the military CSDP capabilities solely in support of NATO and together with the U.S.⁴³ This UK position does not influence the deployment of civilian instruments. With the Treaty of Lisbon, a

more coherent foreign policy could change this difference in views on the use of military assets.

The ongoing animosity between Turkey, Greece and Cyprus provides another serious challenge for the CSDP and the NATO-EU relationship. Cyprus and Turkey in the respective EU and NATO councils block any initiatives to increase cooperation.⁴⁴ This reduces the possibility to overcome the French – British differences by using NATO as the platform for planning and executing military operations in support of CSDP.

Some scholars state that CSDP is just the European pillar of NATO⁴⁵ since the so-called “Berlin-plus” mechanism links all CSDP action to NATO. Via “Berlin-plus” the EU has access to NATO assets and capabilities for planning of operations on a case by case basis. It has only been used twice. The first time it was used was when EU took over Concordia in the Former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) in March 2003. The mission was accomplished eight months later. Later that year, when the EU took over responsibility for Bosnia from NATO and deployed EUFOR ALTHEA it was decided to make use of the NATO Command and Control structure. The recent successful autonomous operations of the EU have shown that the EU no longer requires depending on NATO infrastructure as it was expected a few years ago.

Furthermore since EU’s enlargement in 2004 when, among others, Cyprus and Malta joined, there have been some formal problems in the relationship between the two organizations. Whenever EU-NATO issues of strategic importance are discussed, “Berlin-plus” stipulates that only states who participate in NATO Partnership for Peace (PFP) and have a security arrangement with NATO can take part. Malta rejoined PFP last year and can take part now. Cyprus does not possess a security arrangement with

NATO. As of 2010 Cyprus is not allowed to take part in meetings where the EU use of NATO assets is discussed.

The result of the limited cooperation between the two organizations is that both NATO and the EU currently execute anti piracy operations off the coast of Somalia. Both headquarters are located in Northwood (UK). Although the cooperation on the working level is very good, formally they have only limited contact with each other.⁴⁶ Of course this is a waste of effort and resources. In current times this is unacceptable. Moreover since 21 states are members of both organizations, NATO and EU have a mutual interest to strengthen their cooperation by identifying and acknowledging each others capabilities and more important their own strengths and weaknesses.

If the Europeans want to act in crisis and conflict areas independent of the U.S. not only the civilian instruments need to be present, but also a credible defense and security structure is required. On the military side full implementation of an independent CSDP asks for flexible and mobile forces to address the threats. This requires more resources and a more effective use of those for defense.⁴⁷ The requirements are defined in the Headline Goal. So far this has only resulted in the establishment of EU Battle Groups. These are joint and combined task forces of 1500 soldiers plus combat support, deployable within 10 days. Every 6 months two Battle Groups are on stand-by for deployment to any place within 6000 km from Brussels. However, so far EU BG's have not been deployed due to the many caveats of the BG providing member states.

Compared to the U.S. the military capabilities of the EU are very limited. The EU spends 1.7% of its GDP (\$311 billion) on defense⁴⁸, while the U.S. spends 4% (\$713 billion). The high spending on defense is much more accepted by the American voters than by European voters. If public spending needs to be reduced or taxes increased in

times of economic recession, Europeans do not accept it unless the defense budget gets its fair share. In the U.S. this pressure is almost absent.⁴⁹ The financial crisis and the need for budget cuts in Europe make it very unlikely that the defense budget will increase. It is more likely that individual EU member states face serious reductions in their defense budgets. The current differences in military capabilities between Europe and the U.S. will increase. The result is that direct military cooperation between EU and U.S. is unlikely and will continue to be done via NATO. However the combination of civilian and military instruments and the large budget ensure that the EU is very well capable of executing civilian-military operations alongside of or subsequent to U.S. operations.

Conclusion

CSDP is only ten years old. In those ten years a lot has been achieved. A total of 24 operations and missions have been successfully accomplished or are ongoing. The EU has shown that it has the capability to react fast and decisive. But it does not yet use its potential to the full extent. Improvements need to be made on the cooperation between Member States, the cooperation with NATO and the transatlantic relationship.

EU and U.S. security strategies are convergent on their assessments of the threats and their root causes. While the EU Security Strategy recognizes the United States as a strategic partner, the new US National Security Strategy only sees the EU security in context with NATO.⁵⁰ However, the EU CSDP provides a capability that is fully in line with the U.S. interests. Therefore the U.S. reluctance to support CSDP is not the right approach. U.S. should support further developments in this field.

The U.S. can contribute by paying more attention to Europe as a whole instead to individual member states, thus identifying the importance of the Union. The new Security

Strategy by the Obama Administration recognizes the European aspirations for greater integration, but focuses on its role in Eastern European countries.⁵¹ The Secretary of State made a first step in addressing civilian capabilities of the EU in her “Remarks on the Future of European Security.”⁵² The next step should be recognizing CSDP as a whole. In addition to addressing individual European countries separately, especially UK, France and Germany, the U.S. should use the EU as their primary point of contact. Forty years after Henry Kissinger asked what the phone number of Europe is, Europe indeed has one phone number at both the level of the President, the President of the European Council,⁵³ as well as at the level of the Secretary of State, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.

The obvious difference between the U.S. military driven crisis management and the EU politically driven approach to crises should be explored. The differences do not divert, but complement each other; a good co-operation in crisis management could lead to a very effective approach. The U.S. and the EU should improve their relationship on security issues based on their common interests as economic world powers. NATO can play an important role, especially if the new NATO Strategic Concept acknowledges the role of the EU. In the future this should lead to a delineation of tasks in the global arena. The U.S. and NATO collaborate on enforcing peace, NATO and EU work on stabilization of the situation and the EU on monitoring and reconstruction.

Endnotes

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²⁶ Barack Obama, *National Security Strategy*, (Washington, DC: The White House, May 2010) Introduction.

²⁷ Volker Heise, *The ESDP and the Transatlantic Relationship*, (Berlin, Germany: Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, November 2007) 9.

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⁴⁸ There are large differences between Member States, i.e. France and UK around 2.4%, Germany and Italy 1.3% and Ireland 0.5 %.

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⁵⁰ Barack Obama, *National Security Strategy*, 41.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 42.

⁵² Rodham Clinton, *Remarks on the Future of European Security*.

⁵³ The President of the European Council chairs the meetings of Heads of State and Heads of Governments.